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BILLERICAY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year 1945

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE DISTRICT.

Medical Officer of Health :

Dr. J. Douglas Wells, O.B.E. (Mil.).

District Medical Officers and Public Vaccinators :

Dr. W. E. H. Quennell Dr. R. Bowesman
Dr. J. C. Campbell.

Pathologist :

The E.M.S. Laboratory at St. Andrew's Hospital, Billericay.

Sanitary Inspector : A. L. Ledden, M.S.I.A., Cert. S.I.B.

Second Sanitary Inspector : H. J. Sleigh.

Surveyor : H. B. Mayhew, F.I.A.S.

Deputy Surveyor : H. J. M. Baker, M.Inst.M. & Cy.E.

Chief Engineering Assistant : W. E. Lee, A.M.Inst.M. & Cy.E.

Chief Architectural Assistant : A. J. Strong, A.R.I.B.A.

Sewage Works Manager & Cleansing Superintendent : D. M. Betts,
M.Inst.S.P.

Building Inspectors : T. G. Gozzett.
T. D. Merrett.
R. G. Cummings.

Clerk : A. Hatt, LL.B. London.

Deputy Clerk : F. J. Haynes.

To the Chairman and Members of the Billericay Urban District Council :

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report upon the health and sanitary circumstances of the Billericay Urban District for the year ending 31st December, 1945.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area : 29,217 acres.

Population : 37,430 (R.G.).

Number of inhabited houses at the end of 1945, according to the Rate Book : 12,000 approximately.

Rateable Value : £203,719.

Sum represented by a Penny Rate : £809.

Social Conditions.

This urban district can really be described as a rural area. It covers many square miles of land which is almost entirely agricultural.

Its situation within easy reach of London has brought to it within the last 30 years many residents whose daily occupation is in London. The very good railway service given by the two Railway Systems, the London Midland and Scottish and the London and North Eastern, in this district has undoubtedly influenced its development as a dormitory for London. Most of these people have come from the crowded suburban districts of London. To nearly all of them the attraction is a house for themselves with a piece of garden which they can cultivate and in which their children can play in safety and privacy instead of the crowded streets of a big town. It is noticeable that, of these many residents who come out of the town, the ones who make a success of this venture have either been country born or country bred a generation back. They have born and bred in them a love of the country as opposed to a town. They wish for the colour of the countryside, the good clean air which blows from off green fields, woodlands and hedges. They seek quiet and restfulness after their day's work in the town. They seek the greater freedom of the spaciousness of the country. They tire of the drabness of a city with its hard paved roads and paths, its dust and soot laden atmosphere, its cramped views and its lack of trees. There are some who do not make a success of the venture of life in the country, and after a trial of this life, go back to the town, to its noise, its lights, its entertainments and its crowds. I have found that such people are those whose families for many generations back have always lived in towns. To watch and study nature in its growth and charm has no appeal for them.

This district provides homes for many elderly people, whose circumstances of their livelihood have required them to live in towns and cities, but who, having retired from business and their work, seek a home in the country where they can live out the years which remain to them in peace and quietude. This district seems

to grant long life to many people. Men and women between the ages of 80 and 90 make up an appreciable part of the population; individuals over 90 are not by any means a rarity.

This is essentially a healthy district—its rainfall not excessive—its sunshine above the average for many parts of England. Its winters and early springs are mostly cold, the prevailing wind being N.E. or E.

Apart from agriculture and market gardening, it has very few industries which can provide employment for its population. Its soil varies in its different parts, from sand and gravel, through loamy clay to the heavy London clay. The latter found more in those parts which border on the River Thames.

Its development during the last 30 years has been fairly rapid, possibly somewhat haphazard and chiefly centred round four areas, viz., Billericay, Wickford, Laindon and Pitsea. The reason for development in the parts of the district is the facilities provided by the railways and their stations. With the making of arterial roads and the development of public bus services, the population has tended to get further away from the railway stations. Its future development requires to be carefully safeguarded to retain its rural aspect and at the same time provide those amenities, i.e., adequate water, drainage, lighting and heating, which we now recognise as necessities of the modern home. It can provide recreation and playgrounds, community centres, youth centres and educational facilities for the young people who have left school.

The war and the destruction it wrought in so many parts of London has made everyone conscious of the fact that London was too big and too crowded. The proposal to build satellite towns outside London is a possible solution. Were such a town to be built in this urban district, it could, by careful planning, still retain a very great deal of its rural aspect. The provision of factories for the lighter industries need not make the district ugly. Their provision would be advantageous financially and should help to prevent the problem of unemployment from which this district suffered much in the years between the two big wars. The Laindon and Pitsea areas were the most affected.

Population.

The population of this district for the year 1945 is given as 37,430 by the Registrar General, representing an increase of 320 over the figure for 1944, which was 37,110.

Members of the Armed Forces are excluded from this total.

The vital statistics have been worked out on this figure given by the Registrar General.

For this year, the death rate shews an increase of 0.4 and the birth rate a decrease of 1.5.

Vital Statistics.

Live Births.				Total.	Male.	Female.
Legitimate	....	....	....	600	279	321
Illegitimate	....	....	....	39	15	24
Total Birth Rate, Legitimate and Illegitimate 17.1.						

Still Births.

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 live and still Births 28.9.

				Total.	Male.	Female.
Deaths.				553	279	274
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population 14.8.						
Puerperal Sepsis	....	....	....	-	-	-
Other Puerperal causes	....	....	....	1	-	1

Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age—

1. All Infants per 1,000 live births	....	....	....	50.1
2. Legitimate Infants per 1,000 live births	....	....	....	50.
3. Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	....	....	....	51.3

		M.	F.	Total.	Rate.
Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ....	....	51	58	109	2.9
Deaths from Measles ....	....	-	3	3	
Deaths from Whooping Cough ....	....	-	-	-
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ....	....	2	1	3	

DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES DURING 1945.

Age.	Deaths.			No. of Deaths which apply to District.
	No. in District.	Outward Transfers.	Inward Transfers	
Under 1 year	15	4	18	29
1 and under 2	4	1	1	4
2 and under 5	7	—	2	9
5 and under 15	9	1	4	12
15 and under 25	8	3	3	8
25 and under 35	5	1	3	7
35 and under 45	18	6	9	21
45 and under 55	36	16	8	28
55 and under 65	101	40	17	78
65 and under 75	172	67	39	144
75 and upwards	316	138	35	213
Total	691	277	139	553

INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFICATIONS RECORDED IN AGE GROUPS.

Age in Years:	Age un-													65 Age un- known.
	Under 1.	1-2.	2-3.	3-4.	4-5.	5-10.	10-15.	15-20.	20-35.	35-45.	45-65.	65		
Diphtheria ...	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	1	1	1	—	—	—	
Infective Hepatitis ...	—	—	—	—	1	3	4	5	3	1	4	—	—	
Scarlet Fever ...	—	2	3	3	2	22	4	4	3	—	1	—	—	
Chickenpox ...	1	3	1	3	4	10	5	2	—	—	—	—	—	
Acute Anterior Poliomyelitis ...	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	
Rubella ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	
Pneumonia ...	3	1	—	2	1	8	1	2	2	5	4	5	—	
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	—	1	
Puerp. Pyrexia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	
Dysentery ...	—	—	1	1	—	2	1	—	1	2	1	—	6	
Whooping Cough ...	4	9	13	7	12	40	5	1	1	2	1	—	—	
Malaria ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	
Measles ...	15	37	40	57	66	306	31	11	12	5	2	1	—	
TOTALS	25	52	59	73	86	388	53	27	27	17	15	6	7	

INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFICATIONS
EXCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS

	Whooping Cough.	Diphtheria.	Scarlet Fever.	Chickenpox.	Erysipelas.	Pneumonia.	Measles.	Spinal Cerebro Meningitis.	Puer. Pyrexia.	Ophthalmia Neonatorum.	Acute Anterior Polyomyelitis.	Dysentry.	Infective Hepatitis.	Malaria.	Rubella.
Billericay	...	2	13	13	—	7	153	2	1	—	1	10	5	—	—
Laindon	...	3	11	1	—	2	120	1	1	1	—	1	5	—	1
Wickford	...	—	10	5	1	7	124	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Pitsea	...	—	3	2	1	4	95	—	—	1	—	3	7	—	—
Great Burstead	...	—	—	1	—	2	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Basildon	...	—	—	2	—	—	21	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Crays Hill	...	—	—	1	—	1	20	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Nevendon	...	—	3	1	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lt. Burstead	...	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
B. Gifford	...	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vange	...	—	—	—	—	3	29	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—
N. Benfleet	...	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
R. Bellhouse	...	—	3	4	—	1	10	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dunton	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
	95	6	44	29	2	29	583	4	1	2	2	15	21	1	1

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases.

Age Periods.	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	1	3	2
5 - 15	2	-	5	6
15 - 25	1	6	3	1
25 - 35	2	5	2	-
35 - 45	2	3	-	-
45 - 55	2	5	-	-
55 - 65	1	-	-	-
65 onwards	1	1	-	-
Age not known	-	1	-	-
Total	11	22	13	9

Diphtheria Immunisation.

The immunisation of children has continued quite actively during the year as the following figures will show :—

No. of children under 5 years of age completing immunisation	342
No. of children between 5 and 15 years completing immunisation	63
Total	405

Milk Production.

Unfortunately in 1945, it was not possible to increase the milk available to the general public. This was through no fault or want of effort on the part of the dairy farmer. One of the main reasons was that, although the war in Europe ended in May of this year, the supply of cattle feed was still very restricted.

Priority for children, expectant mothers and some invalids continued, but elderly people and young folk in their teens did not receive adequate supplies for their special needs.

It can only be hoped that the future will bring some alleviation of this shortage.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

A. Laboratory Facilities.

These are provided for at the Emergency Medical Services Laboratory, situated in the grounds of St. Andrew's Hospital.

B. Ambulance Facilities.

An Ambulance is available at St. Andrew's Hospital to take civilian cases to the hospital.

An Ambulance is also stationed at the Isolation Hospital to collect infectious disease cases from the Joint Hospital Board Area and take them to the Isolation Hospital.

During the months of January to August inclusive, the Civil Defence Ambulance Service was used whenever necessary for ordinary civilian cases, in addition to any war casualties whom they were required to transport.

In the summer of this year, the Local Authority purchased two ex-army ambulances to inaugurate a service run and financed by the Council.

A small staff of five persons, three male and two female, was appointed to run this service. Those appointed were Mr. Jones as supervisor, Mr. Riches, Mr. Boutell, Mrs. Wood and Miss Evans. All were required to act as driver/attendants.

Some small alterations and some redecorating were done to one of the ambulances to enable the Service to start as soon as possible. For the other ambulance, the Surveyor was asked to obtain estimates for putting on to it a new modern type of body to replace the war type of the army.

The Service actually started on 4th September but with only four of the staff as Mr. Boutell resigned his appointment very shortly after it was made, he preferring to carry on his job as Storekeeper at Barleylands. Later in the year, Mr. Boughtwood was appointed to fill Mr. Boutell's place, commencing duty on 3rd December. It was not found possible to run a 24-hour service with this small staff and an arrangement was made unofficially with the Master of St. Andrew's Hospital that the ambulance stationed there should be used to augment the service in those cases where a patient required to be taken to St. Andrew's Hospital. This hospital ambulance was not permitted to be used for other than this class of case.

The Council ambulances are housed at the Council's Dépôt at Barleylands at night and brought to the yard of the Council offices during the day.

An office with a telephone was made available in the Civil Defence Headquarters, but this arrangement was only of a temporary nature as it was anticipated that the Civil Defence Office would shortly be closing down.

The number of patients conveyed from the 4th September to the 31st December was 147—the miles travelled to do this was 6,148.

The staff has not so far been provided with any uniform and no grant has been made to any member of it for the wear and tear of their own clothes.

This ambulance service requires much further development to make it adequate for and a credit to this Authority.

C. Treatment Centres, Welfare and School Clinics.

These are under the control of the County Council.

E. Hospitals.

The Emergency Medical Services Hospital attached to St. Andrew's Hospital, Billericay, was closed down in the month of July. St. Andrew's, itself, which is owned by the County Council, was in active use all through the year.

The Infectious Disease Hospital at Gooseberry Green continues to function satisfactorily in spite of inadequate numbers in the nursing and domestic personnel.

THE PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

There was an epidemic of measles during the year, 583 cases being notified. This may not be the real total as many people consider this disease to be a minor one and do not consult a doctor. They disregard the fact that its consequences may be of a very serious nature.

In other respects, the health of the district has remained fairly good during the year. People are becoming a little tired after the strain of the war years and consequently are more susceptible to the common and influenzal colds prevalent in the winter months, but serious epidemics have been averted.

The Notification of Diphtheria.

Cases of this disease in the Urban District remain very low, only 6 being notified during the year—just one case more than in 1944.

Scabies.

I am glad to report that there were very few scabies cases during the year.

Housing.

This Council has given a great deal of time and consideration to this very urgent problem of dealing with inadequately housed people in this district.

Temporary Houses.

Sites for Temporary Houses have been obtained as follows:—

Site.	No. of Houses to be built on such sites.	No. of Houses authorised by the Minister of Health.
Laindon Temporary Site	50)
Wickford Temporary Site	60)
Billericay Temporary Site	50)
		) 249
Contemplated Sites)
)
Pitsea Temporary Site	89)

Fourteen pre-fabricated houses of the American Type have been completed at Laindon and are already occupied.

The number in course of erection is 86.

Much preparatory work has been done for these sites in the way of planning for roads, drainage, water supplies, etc., etc., also in the provision of electricity and gas for lighting, heating and cooking.

The pre-fabricated houses, although they are not very attractive in their external appearance, are well fitted internally with very modern labour saving devices for heating, cooking and lighting and the storing of food. Each house is fitted with a bathroom and a good sized bath, modern lavatory accommodation and adequate storage room for coal and such necessary things as boots and bicycles.

Permanent Houses.

Sites for Permanent Houses have been obtained as follows :—

Site.	No. of Houses to be built on such sites.	No. of Houses authorised by the Minister of Health.
Laindon Permanent Site	196)
Billerical Permanent Site	212)
Pitsea Permanent Site	104)
)
Contemplated Sites		) 200
)
Wickford Permanent Site	283)
Vange Permanent Site	147)

The type of Permanent House to be erected merits serious thought. Certain general conditions are essential, i.e. :—

1. The rent must be an economic one, but one well within the reach of the working man.
2. The house must be well built and weather proof.
3. It must have the modern amenities of an adequate and good water supply and modern sewerage. Light from Electricity or Gas. Adequate heating and cooking facilities. Good and efficient storage for Food, Coal, Household Utensils and Clothes.
4. The House requires to be sited so that it gets the maximum of sunshine in its principal living and sleeping rooms.
5. Open spaces in proximity to the houses with playgrounds for the children.
6. School and religious facilities should be available nearby.
7. Community Social Halls, Cinemas and Playing Grounds must be included in the planning of the sites.
8. The houses should not be of a uniform type and appearance and should conform to the amenities of the area in which they are built.
9. The problem of old people who live alone, singly or in couples, has to be considered. I suggest that thought be given to the provision of flats for such people, these flats to be built in the

form of two-storied houses similar in appearance and height to a permanent council house and not more than 6 flats to a block. Each two flats would have a piece of garden. It is not every old person who wishes to, or is physically able to cultivate a piece of garden and in the case of flats, the upper storey one could be let to such as do not wish for a garden and the lower to such as wish for a piece of garden to cultivate. Each flat should contain one good sized living room with a kitchenette attached, fitted with modern labour saving devices, one good sized bedroom and one small bedroom in addition; an indoor lavatory with washing and bathing facilities. A small coal bunker could be fitted in the kitchenette. These small blocks of flats could be designed to be attractive from outside—warm and comfortable on the inside.

Another possibility for old people, especially suitable for single old people, would be the Hostel type of building, having a common dining room for the use of all the residents and a common sitting room or recreation room. Each resident would have one room of the type of a bed-sitting room which should be adequately heated. Many old people, who are forced in the end years of their life to live alone, find life in a one room lodging very lonely and very difficult. The facilities for preparing cooked food for themselves are lacking as well as those for washing and bathing. Above all they feel the lack of someone to chat with especially in the long winter evenings and the many days when bad weather prevents them getting out. The hostel would require one room with wash basins and bathing facilities. To staff it, a housekeeper with sufficient staff to prepare and serve the meals and generally to supervise and keep the rooms clean would be required.

Cottages for Agricultural Workers.

A large part of the Billericay Urban District is of a rural character. Agriculture is still the chief industry within the District. Much of the land is zoned as agricultural. During the war years the production of many forms of food for man and beast has been much increased and intensified. A lot of what was formerly grass-land, used chiefly for feeding cattle, has been ploughed up and produces now wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, sugar beet for human consumption, in addition to roots and special kinds of grass for cattle feeding. This increased cultivation has augmented the demand for land workers and consequently there is a greater demand for houses for the farm workers, within a reasonable distance of the farms. Many of the farms have a small number of workers cottages attached to them—some farms have none. A number of the existing farm cottages have got into a poor condition; some are unfit for

human habitation and should be condemned. Others have fallen into disrepair through the difficulty of getting any repair work done on them during the war years. Nearly all lack the modern facilities of adequate living space, main water and drainage, efficient lighting, heating and cooking facilities with the necessary storage accommodation for food and other essentials, but in addition to the above defects, the increase of food production has made the lack of a sufficient number of cottages to house agricultural workers very pronounced.

In its planning of new houses for workers of all sorts, this Authority requires to give consideration to the provision of new cottages for the farm workers. I suggest that such cottages should not of necessity be built on individual farms, but should be built in groups of four, eight or twelve houses, on land where all the modern amenities are available—such groups to house workers from groups of farms.

The modern farm worker and even more so his wife and children does not want to live in isolated spots, but prefers to live in groups where he can have the social benefits of near neighbours, where there is available, with a reasonable distance, a good bus service by which their wives can get into the towns to do their shopping, the children to school and the family able to get recreational facilities in the nearby towns.

The farms of this area lend themselves readily to this grouping system. The necessity of increased production of food from the fields of this country has been stressed during the war years. The Government ask the farmer still to keep up and wherever possible to increase food production. To do this, more workers on the land are required. To tempt men and women who have come, or are coming out of the war services, to seek employment on the land—and many are anxious for the open air life—it is necessary that houses be provided for them to live in and make a home in. As a considered estimate of the number of houses required throughout the district, I give the figure of 90 to 100 in groups of varying sizes. In some cases these houses can be included in the houses already planned to be built on the sites for permanent houses already acquired or already planned to be acquired. In other cases they will require to be planned for on separate sites to suit the group of farms. I recommend that the Council give consideration to this matter as being one of very considerable urgency.

Defence in War.

It was in 1936 that I was first required to consider what arrangements and organisation would be needed in this Area in the event of War arising between the British and the German Empires.

Everyone realised that a future war would differ in its method of attack and defence from the Great War of 1914-1918, principally because of the very rapid development made in the Flying Services of the civilised nations and also because of the possibility of Gas attacks from the air. The Scientists were busy on the work of destruction and the use of gas both from the land and from the air as a means of attack on an enemy had developed much since the first gas attack in the Ypres Salient in the spring of 1915, and during the years following the Great War. It came to be realised that the Aeroplane could be used in this method of attack to an unlimited degree and over very extensive areas.

This matter was put before and considered by the Billericay Urban District Council. Tentative arrangements were considered for the siting of First Aid Posts, for collecting and treating casualties caused by this form of attack and also by High Explosive and Incendiary Bombs which also could and might be dropped by enemy aircraft. The need for having an adequately trained staff to deal with these eventualities was also considered. The Government had put forward general principles and it was left to the Scheme Making Authority in each Area—which in the case of Billericay was the Essex County Council—to formulate a policy. In 1936, the County Council had not done this. Only small progress was made, but it was a start. From this start, there was developed and used during the war years of 1939-1945 a Medical Service with a trained personnel and the necessary equipment. This, together with the Ancillary Services whose basic object was the same in the saving of life but which were not strictly medical, responded ably and loyally when put to the test during those war years.

The First Establishment authorised in September, 1939, was :—

Service.	No. of Personnel authorised.	Whole-time Staff authorised.	Reserve.
F.A. Posts	200 men & women	50	25%
Ambulance Drivers & Attendants	108 men & women	27	25%
F.A. Parties	120 men	38	50%

By authorised establishment is meant the number of people it was permissible to enrol.

After due consideration, First Aid Posts were established in :—

St. Andrew's Hospital Billericay ;

The Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic Buildings at Laindon, Pitsea and Vange ;

The Junior School at Wickford.

At each of these, a local doctor was put in charge. He had as his staff, a Nursing Sister or a trained woman Superintendent or a

male lay superintendent, together with a controlled number of men and women as drivers and attendants for the ambulances, or workers to carry out first aid or more extended treatment at the Post under the direction of the Medical Officer in Charge.

The charge of this service for the district was deputed by the County Medical Officer to the Medical Officer of Health of the district.

The establishment personnel was altered from time to time during the war years as national needs for other services or for industry were found to be more urgent.

In addition to the Fixed First Aid Posts mentioned above, a Mobile First Aid Post was provided and fitted up in a Commer Bus. It was in charge of a local doctor and he had a first aid staff under him.

The establishment which was in force in 1945 when the war with Germany ended was :—

Service.	Unit Establishment.	Personnel Establishment.	Whole-time Personnel.
F.A. Posts 	91	137	16
Ambulance 	21	45	15
F.A. Parties had since February, 1944, been amalgamated with the Rescue Service, the figures for the combined Service being :—			
	84	222	15

I want to say here and also to stress the excellent service rendered by all the personnel of the Medical Services throughout all the years of war. Long hours of duty were undertaken, either by night or day, under difficult and often hazardous conditions, cheerfully and courageously. I received expressions of thanks from many of the people who were rescued and tended at many incidents, of the cheerful, capable and unwearying service rendered by the personnel of the medical services.

Among the ancillary services there were established Rest Centres, where bombed-out people could be temporarily housed and fed. These Centres dealt with persons who did not require hospital or surgical first aid ; many of them suffered from a small degree of shock and from nervous tension and exhaustion. It was the duty of the Billeting Officer on the day following the incident to find billets for these people who, on account of the damage caused to their homes, were not able to return to them. These Rest Centres were provided with bedding, blankets and food, and the Council Schools were frequently made use of for them.

A Mortuary Service was also established and put under the charge of the Senior Sanitary Inspector. He co-operated with the local undertakers and when required, he made the necessary funeral arrangements. Inquests were dispensed with in all cases of death from enemy action.

Bombs.—The first bomb in the Billericay Area fell at Wickford on the 25th May, 1940—it was of the High Explosive type. The last enemy missile in the Area fell at Buttsbury, Billericay on the 25th March, 1945, being a V.1. or Fly Bomb.

The variety and numbers of objects dropped from the air were as follows :—

Type.	Exploded.	Unexploded.	
High Explosive Bombs	.... 743	198
Incendiary Bombs	.... 15,371 approx.	2,034 approx.
Oil Bombs	.... 45	1
Parachute Mines	.... 20	8
Barrage Balloons	.... 5	
A.A. Shells	.... 25	110
Fire Pots	.... 12	
Small Yellow Bombs	.... 1	
Phosphorus Bombs	.... 1	38
Anti-Personnel Bombs	.... 2	8
V.1. or Fly Bombs	.... 18	
V.2. or Long Range Rockets	39		
	British or American.	Enemy.	
Crashed Aircraft	.... 17	9
Airmen, dead	.... 7	15
Airmen, alive	.... 11	6
Camouflets (cavities caused in the earth by the entrance of bombs)	.... 20	
Incendiary Discs	.... These were used to ignite ripe cornfields, but were not seen in this Area.	
	Killed.	Serious.	Slight.
Casualties.	24	92	454

Number of properties damaged.

Completely demolished	....	....	....	26
Seriously damaged which had to be demolished	....	....	....	123
Seriously damaged but usable and capable of repair	....	....	....	457
Seriously damaged and evacuated	....	....	....	158
Slightly damaged	....	....	....	6,126

Note.—Some properties were damaged several times in different incidents.

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SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

Dwelling houses with respect to defects :—

Under Public Health and Housing Acts ....	....	....	1,277
Premises with respect to vermin ....	....	....	56
Factories and Workshops ....	....	....	32
Slaughterhouses, Meat and other food shops and stalls ....	....	....	576
Cowsheds and Dairies ....	....	....	216
Watercourses, ditches and other nuisance inspections ....	....	....	14
Houses visited with respect to water supply and shortage ....	....	....	205
Dwelling houses with respect to Infectious Disease ....	....	....	102
Shop Acts ....	....	....	6
Essex County Council Act, 1933 (Tents, vans and sheds) ....	....	....	10
Visits with respect to Social Welfare Huts ....	....	....	6
Visits under M.O.H. circular 2845 (Rehousing, etc.) ....	....	....	138
Visits with respect to Emergency Mortuary Services ....	....	....	12
Visits with respect to Decontamination of Food ....	....	....	46
Visits under E.C.C. Act, 1933, with respect to Hairdressers premises ....	....	....	12
			2,708

Water Supply.

During the year the Southend Waterworks Company extended mains in the Area as follows :—

					Yards.
Basildon	....	....	....	....	34
Great Burstead	....	....	....	....	107
Laindon	....	....	....	....	141
Little Burstead	....	....	....	....	220
Pitsea	....	....	....	....	137
Ramsden Crays	....	....	....	....	167
Wickford	....	....	....	....	64
					<hr/>
					870

The number of premises connected to the mains during the year were 117. This is satisfactory having regard to the shortage of materials and labour.

During the summer months a water shortage was again experienced and 234 applications were received for the Council to deliver water. The Council met all applications and as a result 141,180 gallons were delivered, of which 22,645 gallons were delivered by the N.F.E., the remainder being delivered by Council's employees by equipment kindly loaned by the N.F.S. Our thanks have been extended to the N.F.S. for their kind co-operation and assistance.

The Council have realised the importance of the extension of mains in the area and under the provision of the Water Act, 1945, have given instructions for a scheme to be prepared. This scheme was well on the way by the end of the year, and it is hoped with the assistance of the Ministry of Health, Essex County Council and Southend Waterworks Company to lay approximately 22 miles of water mains to serve roughly 900 houses and the erection of an additional 37 standpipes.

Samples of water were taken from rain water wells in the District and where the water was found to be unfit for human consumption, steps were taken to improve the quality and adequacy of the supply.

In one instance an appeal was made to the Ministry of Health against a Notice served to provide a satisfactory supply of water. Up to the end of the year the result of the appeal had not been made known.

Shops Acts.

During the year 6 visits were made to premises under the Shops Acts and only in one case was it necessary to serve a Statutory Notice, this being for washing facilities and water supply; the requirements of the Notice were complied with.

It has not been possible, owing to the pressure of work, to carry out a systematic inspection of shops but no complaints have been received regarding the hours of closing or of offences against the Sunday Trading Restrictions Act.

Several enquiries have been received from persons demobilised from the Forces as to the provisions of the Shops Acts and in each case advice has been gladly given.

Smoke Abatement.

No action has been necessary during the year.

Swimming Baths and Pools.

Only one swimming pool has been in use during the year, this being owned privately. No samples of water have been taken but no complaints have been received as to the fitness of the water for bathing.

Eradication of Bed Bug.

No very serious cases of infestation have occurred during the year but several enquiries have been received as to the best method of vermin destruction.

Applications have been received from builders employed on bomb damage repairs for assistance in vermin destruction and the Public Health Department have responded readily by supplying vermicide and loaning sprays gratis. Furniture from bombed buildings has been treated before being removed from store into houses requisitioned for use by bombed out persons.

Lethane (L. 384) was still the vermicide chiefly used during the year. A supply of D.D.T. powder and liquid was delivered at the end of the year but the results of its use were not recorded by the end of the year as no complaints of infestation were received after its delivery. It will be interesting to note results when the warm weather commences.

No complaints have been received as to vermin infestation of Council Houses.

In two instances houses were treated with Hydrogen Cyanide, the work being carried out by a firm of experts.

Scabies.

The incidence of scabies has declined considerably and all cases notified were visited, the persons being advised to have treatment from private practitioners. Where incomes were limited arrangements were made for the patients to be treated at the County Clinics. After the cases had been notified, instructions were given for bedding to be disinfected at the Local Isolation Hospital.

Rats and Mice Destruction.

The Public Health Department have administered the provisions of the Rats and Mice Destruction Act, 1919, as far as is practically possible. All complaints received were dealt with promptly and visits paid to premises where infestation occurred. The technique of pre-baiting was passed on to persons whose premises were infested with rats and re-visits paid showed that good results were obtained.

The Council again made a contract with the Essex War Agricultural Executive Committee for the destruction of rats and mice at the various sewage works and refuse tips. An arrangement has now been made between the Pest Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food whereby the owners or occupiers of private premises may make private contracts with the Essex War Agricultural Committee for the destruction of rats and mice in private premises; this arrangement relieves the Council of a lot of work but the administration of the Rats and Mice Destruction Act still remains the responsibility of this Authority. The closest liaison exists between this Council and the various Ministries who are interested in rat destruction.

Complaints were received during the year of damage caused to crops by rabbits but as these pests do not come within the Rats and Mice Destruction Act the complaints were referred to the War Agricultural Committee for attention.

Housing.

During the year a total of 1,277 visits was made with respect to defects in premises under the Housing and Public Health Acts. Preliminary or Statutory Notices were served in every case where defects existed and in which the owners failed to take steps to remedy same. As the result of the service of notices 74 premises were made fit.

Of the number of premises inspected quite a few of them were found to be unfit through enemy action and these were passed to the Surveyor for attention and for the carrying out of first aid or permanent repairs.

A large number of houses were inspected upon the request of owners who desired assistance in obtaining materials to carry out repairs.

No demolitions were carried out during the year but in one instance the Ministry of Health were requested to give permission for the issue of a Demolition Order in respect of a house which was dangerous. The Ministry were not prepared to grant permission unless the Council were able to rehouse the tenant but owing to the shortage this could not be done so as a temporary measure the Surveyor caused the front wall to be shored up to prevent collapse.

Great difficulty has been experienced in getting repairs done owing to shortage of labour and materials but it has not been found necessary to take proceedings against any person for failure to comply with Notices served.

Overcrowding.

The problem is still very acute in the area and several hard cases have come to light during visits paid to ascertain housing conditions of applicants for temporary bungalows. Whilst some of the evacuees have returned home, it cannot be said that overcrowding has diminished as men and women demobilised from the Forces have married and brought their wives or husbands home to their parents' houses to live. The Council have, to a small extent, been able to obtain accommodation in other areas for persons evacuated here through the war. No doubt when the temporary houses have been completed the overcrowding problem will be eased considerably.

Public Health Act, 1936.—Nuisances.

During the year 14 visits were paid to premises where nuisances existed. These visits did not include premises where nuisances were caused by the defective condition of the premises. Nearly all the nuisances were caused by the incorrect disposal of sink waste water or night soil mustly due to the lack of drainage facilities and the ignorance of persons in country sanitation. In all cases a warning letter had the desired effect of abating the nuisance.

The incorrect method of disposal of house refuse has caused some trouble but towards the end of the year the Council took over the collection of house refuse from a firm of Contractors and it is hoped that with increased labour and the regular collection of refuse, nuisances from house refuse will be diminished.

Trouble is still being experienced by butchers in the District in the disposal of corned beef tins but now the Council have taken over refuse collection no doubt consideration will be given to the collection of trade refuse from such premises.

Factories and Workshops.

During the year 32 visits were paid to factories; this is a slight increase on the previous year. It was necessary to serve notices in six cases, three being for sanitary conveniences, one for washing facilities, one for means of escape from fire and one for cleanliness. In every case the service of notices resulted in defects being remedied except in one case which was outstanding at the end of the year.

During the year four certificates were granted to owners of factories in respect of means of escape from fire from the factory. Good relationship exists between the Public Health Department and H.M. Inspector of Factories and in cases where the Factories Act is not being complied with the facts are passed on to the Department administering the relative parts of the Act.

During the year the number of factories has increased in the area and there are signs that under Town Planning quite a few large factories will be erected in Factory Zones. One new factory was built during the year.

Rehousing.

The number of applications for houses increased considerably during the year and this has thrown extra work on the Department as persons whose applications are considered by the Housing Committee are visited to ascertain housing conditions.

General.

Owing to the cessation of hostilities extra duties have been imposed on the Public Health Department in connection with the closing down of Emergency Mortuary Services and Decontamination of Food Services and the disposal of equipment, etc.

Closet Accommodation.

During the year eight premises were connected to the sewer. This is a decrease on the previous year but the reason is due to the shortage of labour.

Five houses were completed during the year.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.—Milk and Dairies.

The number of retailers and producers registered with the Council at the end of 1945 was as follows :—

Producers	....	....	101
Retail Purveyors	....	....	32

Licences expiring at 31st December, 1945, to use Special Designations in relation to milk were issued as follows :—

Sale of T.T. from premises	....	....	3
Supplementary licence to sell T.T.	....	....	6
Licences to sell Pasteurised Milk	....	....	3
Supplementary licences to sell Pasteurised Milk	....	....	6
Licences to bottle Accredited Milk	....	....	1
Licences to bottle T.T. Milk	....	....	2
			<hr/>
			22
			<hr/>

During the year 216 visits were paid to cowsheds and dairies and 20 samples of milk taken.

Where it was found that infringements to the provisions of the Milk and Dairies Orders had taken place, steps were taken to ensure that the provisions were complied with. Where bad samples of milk were obtained, the farms or dairies were revisited to find the cause and advice given as to the means of clean milk production.

During the year extensive improvements were carried out to seven farms, three of which were for water supplies and in each of these three cases grants were obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture towards the cost.

One new cowshed and dairy was built to the requirements of the Sanitary Inspector.

In spite of the extra requirements of the Ministry of Agriculture for the production of more food, the cowsheds and dairies in the District are kept in a reasonable state of cleanliness and repair and no serious cases occurred during the year which warranted Police Court action.

During the year the following foods were condemned as being unfit for human consumption :—

Canned Milk ....	....	....	....	181 tins
Canned Fish ....	....	....	....	585 tins
Canned Meat ....	....	....	....	43 tins
Canned Soup ....	....	....	....	4 tins
Canned Vegetables ....	....	....	....	87 tins
Canned Fruit ....	....	....	....	1 tin
Miscellaneous Groceries	....	....	....	60 tins
Eggs ....	....	....	....	1,035
				cwts. qrs. lbs. ozs.
Meat ....	....	....	9 2 1	—
Fish ....	....	....	16 — 1	4
Bacon ....	....	....	— 2 2	12
Cereals ....	....	....	— 3 16	—
Vegetables ....	....	....	5 — —	—
Fruit ....	....	....	1 1 27	—
Butter and Fats ....	....	....	— — 12	—
Cheese ....	....	....	— 2 18	—
Jam ....	....	....	— — 9	—
Sweets ....	....	....	— — —	12
Flour ....	....	....	— — 1	—
Tea ....	....	....	— — 1	—
Corned Beef ....	....	....	4 3 2	2
Corned Mutton ....	....	....	— 1 8	—
Dried Milk ....	....	....	1 3 4	—

Refuse Collection.

The Council's Contractors gave notice of the termination of their contract for the collection and disposal of refuse and, as a result of this, the Council, through the Surveyor's Department, undertook this work by direct labour, commencing on the 1st November, 1945. A disposal tip has been established on land South East of the River Crouch, in Runwell Road, Wickford, and the Council purchased three twelve cu. yd. low loading collection vehicles of the latest type, by Messrs. Dennis Bros., Guildford. No figures are available as to tonnage collected, but it should be possible to supply these and other statistics for the year 1946 at the appropriate time.

Conclusion.

I wish to record my thanks to my fellow officers on the Staff of the Billericay Urban District Council for the willing help given to me whenever it has been asked and to the Members of the Urban District Council for their continued support.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. DOUGLAS WELLS,

Medical Officer of Health.

